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CIA Cambodia

Sihanouk Asserts U.S. Will Gain Prestige if It Leaves Vietnam

Predicts No Face Would Be Lost and Ho Chi Minh Would Ask for American Aid

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Feb. 24 — Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia's Chief of State, said today that the United States would gain prestige and not lose face if it withdrew from Vietnam. He said that even President Ho Chi Minh of North Vietnam would ask for American aid following such a withdrawal.

He said: "I tell the Americans that as an Asian — because I am profoundly Asian — I know there would be no loss of face in their withdrawal from Vietnam. There is loss of face only in the continuation of their criminal policy. They would gain enormous prestige if they left Vietnam alone. Even Ho Chi Minh would ask them for aid without strings."

Prince Sihanouk made this statement at a luncheon given in his honor by the Association of the French Diplomatic Press and the Anglo-American Press Association of Paris.

The Cambodian Chief of State, who is here on a private visit, was received by President de Gaulle last Wednesday.

Messenger for Hanoi

At the luncheon, the Prince said the North Vietnamese representative in Europe had asked him to state that Hanoi stood by its offer to enter into talks with Washington if United States bombing attacks were unconditionally and permanently halted. The same offer was made earlier this week by the representative, Mai Van Bo, in a conversation with reporters of The New York Times.

According to Prince Sihanouk, the North Vietnamese envoy stressed that his Government could not possibly stop helping "its southern brothers, who must liberate themselves from the American invasion." The Prince added that this was Hanoi's answer to President Johnson's demand for a reciprocal gesture to go with a cessation of the American bombing.

Prince Sihanouk, long a neu-



Associated Press Cablephoto

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodian Chief of State, talking yesterday in Paris.

tralist, has over the years come ever closer to the North Vietnamese view of the war. General de Gaulle chose the Cambodian capital last year to express, in a widely publicized speech, views shared by his host on the necessity for American withdrawal and for the neutralization of all of Southeast Asia.

Prince Sihanouk declared that the only threat to the territorial integrity and survival of Cambodia came from the Americans and "the exile Cambodians recruited and paid by the CIA, and the Governments of Saigon and Bangkok."

"We are ready to renew friendly relations with the Americans if they recognize our borders and stop violating our territory," he added.

Asked whether there was any danger that the Vietnamese war would spread to Thailand, the Prince said that such a threat existed because Thailand was "stuffed" with American bases and the United States had "the gift of attracting Communists."

"The best way to make Communists is to put the Americans into a place where there were no Communists before," he said.